

**Wilderness and Civilization, Resource Conservation 373**  
**Fall Semester, 2015**

Instructor: Rachel James [rachel.james@umontana.edu](mailto:rachel.james@umontana.edu), 243---6916

Classtime: MW9:40---11:00 am

Jeanette Rankin Hall 203, most Fridays and some weekends

Office hours: M 11:00---12:00 and T, Th 11:00---12:00; Main Hall 307 (stop in or email for an appointment)

**Course Goals**

NRSM 373 is a seminar class that draws from field trip experiences, guest speakers, and supplemental readings to:

- Explore social perspectives on the human---nature relationship focusing on wilderness, working landscapes, and other areas important for conservation;
- Learn from a range people with different perspectives—ecologists, ranchers, foresters, tribal members, conservation activists, land managers, developers, and others;
- Take an historic look at how interactions among humans and nature have changed and evolved over time;
- Consider needs/responses/applications for the future; and,
- Develop and be able to articulate your personal perspective on your land ethic, wilderness and conservation.

**Course Description**

In the context of trying to understand natural and cultural environments of our past, present, and future, we will explore wilderness in terms of historical values, contemporary actions, and future perspectives. We will unify themes across all courses in the Wilderness and Civilization program, draw from field trip experiences, case studies, community engagement, and High Country News article discussions. We will learn from professionals, academics, and most importantly, each other. There will not be many assigned readings, rather, the 'text' for this class comes from the community experiences, traveling to field trip locations throughout Montana, and engaging with people and places.

**Evaluation**

20% Attendance, Participation	20% participation in daily class / field trip discussions
20% Response papers to field trips	Due each at start of class Weds. after the field day(s)
20% Final project	Proposal topic due Nov 11, final due December 11
15% Quizzes and in---class assignments	Some impromptu, others assigned ahead of time
10% High Country News Assignment	1 pair of students will present each Monday morning
10% Sit Spot Assignment	4 sit spot entries (1 in Sept., 2 Oct., 1 Nov.)
5% Fall Trek Blog Entry	To be completed with cook partner by 9/16

\*\* Late assignments: 1/2 grade per class per day that assignments are late. All assignments are due at the start of class unless specified ahead of time.

**Attendance, Participation and Class Discussion**

Each student is required to think critically and constructively, and to contribute to the quality of discussions both on our field trips and during class periods. Please respect the collective learning experience by being punctual, attentive, and prepared for class and field trips. Participation points will be granted as follows:

- *Attendance and Participation in Class (20 points)*: You are allowed two excused absence; more than that and you will receive one less point for each class missed, and a half point off for each late arrival.
- *High Country News Assignment (10 points)*: Each student will work with a partner to select and article in High Country News (starting with the issue distributed in class on 9/14). You will email the class on Weds of the week before you are assigned to present (always on a Monday) and indicate which article you've chosen. Prepare 5 minutes of an overview of the article, discussing why you chose it and the relevance. Lead the class in a 7---10 minute discussion. You'll be docked points for going over 10 minutes of discussion or under 7 minutes.

### ***Field Trips, Responses and in class assignments (20%)***

Reflect on your conversations and experiences during the field trips. We will continually draw on our field experiences for in class activities and discussions. Missing field trips will hurt your grade. You are allowed one, PRE---ARRANGED excused absence for field trips (and no weekend absences), otherwise, your grade will reflect absence. We are very strict on this policy because field trips are time intensive, and guest speakers are giving us their time to meet with us. Not showing up not only reflects poorly on the program, but it also diminishes your experience in the program. Field trips are demanding and time intensive, but it is one semester, and it is important to participate.

#### *Response papers*

The goal of response papers and in class assignments are to take concrete experiences, such as field trips and meeting with guest speakers, in class discussions and debates, and reflect on these experiences from different angles in order to more fully understand the connections between issues. From reflection, you will increase your ability to conceptualize goals, actions, and ways to participate in solutions. Response papers require weekly engagement in topics, and help inform decisions that may lead to investigations for case studies and further involvement. In class assignments are meant to supplement class discussions and activities. The papers should be 1---2 pages in length and should be a personal reflection (as opposed to simply recounting events) on the field trip/activity. You will receive no more than a 75% if your paper is late, and 5% for every day it is late beyond Weds. (normal deadline for a response paper).

If you need to follow a formal structure for the response papers, you may use the following:

- **Knowledge** – Who, what, where?
- **Summary** – The summary should be concise (often times a few sentences is sufficient), with more focus given to your response. You do not need to report in full the information that you learned on a particular field trip, but rather weave in important details (facts, stories, quotes) that illustrate and provide context for your own ideas. Draw on ideas from readings, speakers or discussions, and push yourself on topics that inspire or confuse you.
- **Application** – Consider the different perspectives, make connections to course topics, and offer your personal perspective. Why is this topic significant?
- **Synthesis** –What would you predict based on...?
- **Evaluation** – Do you agree with the issues discussed? What is your opinion?

Unless otherwise noted, all response papers are due at the start of class the following Weds. Electronic versions or paper copies are acceptable.

**Field Trips:** Reflect on your conversations and experiences during the field trips. We will continually draw on our field experiences for in class activities and discussions. Missing field trips will hurt your grade. You are allowed one, PRE---ARRANGED excused absence for field trips (and no weekend absences), otherwise, your grade will reflect absence. I am very strict on this policy because field trips are time intensive, and guest speakers are giving us their time to meet with us. Not showing up not only reflects poorly on the program, but it also diminishes your experience in the program. I know these field trips are demanding and time intensive, but it is one semester, and it is important to participate.

All written assignments, unless otherwise directed, will be posted on the Moodle site with the due date specified. If you need additional structure to the Please organize your response papers to address your understanding of the following:

***Final Project (20%) Draft due November 11, Final due December 11***

You will have multiple options for a final project for this course. Details on the final project will be made known at the beginning of November and will be responsive to class goals and direction. If you are stressed about this at the beginning of the school year, please make an appointment to chat with me.

**Sit Spot Assignment (10%) *"Weave the landscape into your biography."***

The main intention of the sit spot is to provide a place and structured time for students to practice observation, exploration and reflection of the natural world and their relationship to it. Also, it is a place where students should incorporate many of the journaling techniques introduced through out the semester. Each sit spot session must be at least 45 minutes to 1 hour. You are required to complete one entry in September, two in October, and one in November. The entries must be in your field journal.

These journaling strategies take the following forms:

1. Empirical observations. Please record the time, date and weather of each sit spot visit. It is not required but recommended to write a short narrative, approximately a paragraph, of each visit.

For each entry, draw 4 maps of your sit spot through these 4 different lenses:

- Hydrology and Geology: creeks, ponds, pools, wet spots, culverts, etc.. & soils (sandy, silty, clay), organic detritus, rock outcrops, topographic features (slope, view, orientation, etc.)
- Fauna: tracks, runs, trails, beds, scat, sightings, sounds, carcasses, hair, etc....
- Flora: trees, shrubs, forbes, grasses, ferns, mosses, lichens
- Disturbance: human caused, wind throw, flooding, fire, invasive species

2. Reflection on sensing and knowing. Each map must be accompanied by a personal reflection of what else you are observing in the sit spot. This is very open---ended and meant to push you to write about what kind of experience you are having at your sit spot on the day you choose to create your entry. It is intended to be a 'free---write' exercise in which you explore your connection to that place outside of the more formal empirical observations.

The sit spot assignment is due on November 18. It should include 1 entry from Sept, 2 from October, and 1 from November.

***Academic Misconduct and the Student Conduct Code:***

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at [Student Conduct Code](#).

## ***Course Topics and Field Trips***

### **Week 1---Wilderness Experience**

Preparing for and entering the Fall Trek in the Absaroka---Beartooth Wilderness.

Assignment 1: Field Journal Entry: A personal narrative on Wilderness, wildness and home. Spend no less than 30 minutes writing a story (personal narrative) based in the geographic setting you identified in Monday's activity as 'home'. Explore factors and influences of what has shaped your current definition of the concepts of Wilderness and wildness in your narrative.

### **Week 2---Fall Trek Assignment 2:**

You and your dinner cook partner will work together to create a reflection on the fall trek in the form of a blog entry for the [Wilderness and Civilization blog](#). Write a 500 word narrative and submit 5 images (photos, picture of journal entry, etc, with a description for each) to rachel.james@umontana.edu by the end of the day Weds 9/16. You have many options on how to write the narrative description, ranging from a description of the entire trek, to a specific moment that you both found important. Feel free to be very creative with this assignment.

### **Week 3 – Grounding in Missoula**

Overview of course, share experiences from fall trek, explore the Hellgate Treaty and loss of western tribal lands prior to formation of federal land management agencies and Wilderness Act. Scope out locations for 'sit spot' while on Friday field trip.

Friday Field Trip: Sustainable Transportation with Bob Giordano, Missoula Institute for Sustainable Transportation.

### **Week 4 – The Wilderness Act and the Federal Land Management Agencies**

Wilderness Heroes Hot Drink Party, Weds. Quiz on Heroes and their roles, the Wilderness Act.

Field Trip: Friday 9/25---27 to Magruder Corridor. Fire in the ecosystem with Natalie Dawson

### **Week 5 – Citizen's Role in Public Land Management**

Wilderness Character Monitoring and Alaska BLM Case Study.

Field Trip: Friday 10/2---5 Wilderness Character Monitoring, Missouri Breaks National Monument BLM lands with the Wilderness Institute's Citizen Science Program

### **Week 6 – NEPA in Action on the Rocky Mountain Front**

Oil and gas on the Rocky Mountain Front, Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act, Badger Two Medicine as a case study. NEPA in action.

Field Trip: Friday 10/9---11, Rocky Mountain Front

### **Week 7 – Exploring Local Conservation Strategies within Missoula City Limits**

Role of community agriculture in sustainability, urban design, city planning, city zoning. Bioregional quiz activity.

Field trip: Friday 10/16, community agriculture strategies in Missoula

### **Week 8 – Mid Term Check In**

Final Project introductions on Monday and ideas due on Weds.

Group mid-term check-in with Rachel. One-on-one students check-in's with Rachel.

Field Trip: Friday field trip, Biodiversity transect with Natalie Dawson.

### **Week 9 – Citizen's Role Part II**

Role of the individual in social and environmental change; "One final paragraph of advice: do not burn yourselves out. Be as I am---a reluctant enthusiast....a part---time crusader, a half---hearted fanatic."

Friday Field Trip: TBD

### **Week 10 – Clark Fork River Case Study**

Mining, oil and gas and the economics of Wilderness

Field Trip: Friday 11/6, history of the Clark Fork trip to Milltown Dam, Butte area

### **Week 12 – Tribal Perspectives on Protected Areas**

Beyond America: Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness Case Study, tribal perspectives on protected area management.

Field Trip: Friday 11/20, Wildlife corridors and Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribe

### **Week 11 – Discussion of the Future Baseline**

Strategies for an increasingly complex nexus between Wilderness and Civilization

**No field trip**

### **Week 13**

**Student Presentations, no field trip**

### **Week 14**

**High Country News Quiz, Student Presentations, no field trip**

### **Week 15**

Leave for Como Lake Final Retreat on Wednesday, December 9 at 12pm, return to UM on Friday, December 11 at 12pm

**No final exam for this course.**